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ABSTRACT

The black atypical student, defined as that black student who would be excluded from most colleges and universities in America by traditional admission policy, is beginning to find entrance into institutions of higher education. There is no indication reported of these institutions admitting large numbers of black atypical students. In the education of the black atypical student institutions appear to be taking a conservative approach, despite the data that has tended to indicate that the dropout rate has generally been higher for regular students than for atypical students. Institutions of higher education have several options for admission policies. An institution can justify its right to select students on any criteria thought acceptable by its trustees, faculty, and administration without regard to race, religion, creed, or nationality. The institution can also choose to use a random method of selecting students. Or, the institution may choose selectively to extend its educational offerings to varying students under varying criteria. Somewhere within these three options the various institutions are choosing their course. But their response to the black atypical student is still in doubt. It is the conclusion of this paper that the response itself can only be made within a consideration of what it is that a particular institution is and would be. (RJ)

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# HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE BLACK ATYPICAL STUDENT

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The question of the Black atypical student in higher education today is perplexing. Some educators are sympathetic with the young Black's struggle to be himself and move from underneath an imposed, unstated system that has limited his potential because of his blackness. A few educators are committed to changing whatever is within their power to change in order to actualize their ideals. Still other educators are undecided, more often confused. All of these educators, at one time or another, struggle with the same question: "How shall I respond?"

The rhetoric of the youth of any race or age is often confusing to elders of the society. But today's young Blacks have a way of demanding and refusing to wait patiently on America's cherished methods of committee decision for things that they believe to be morally right and just. The result is that educators have typically become defensive, and effective communication is seldom established. Feeling the natural reaction of an elder to "put youth in its place" and pressured by the community and often the faculty for "firmness" in dealing with intemperate youth, the educator often finds himself doing no more than reacting to one "crisis" after another. He seldom has time, it seems, to think beyond the immediate need.

This situation is unfortunate. The issues being raised by Blacks challenge the whole of the American educational system.

This paper will look closely at some of these issues within higher education.

For the purposes of this paper, the "Black atypical student" will be defined as that Black today who would be excluded from most colleges and universities in America by traditional admission policy. Such a Black would be denied admission under any or all of the following criteria: One, the Black is unable to meet the minimum standards of academic preparation, in terms of past academic performance at a secondary school, set by the particular institution to which he has applied; two, although the Black can meet the minimum standards of academic preparation, there are so many other students scoring higher on the criterion selectors that the openings for entering students are filled before the Black is offered admission: three, the Black lacks the financial means to accept admission to an institution.

Certainly these factors used in identifying the Black atypical student are not the exclusive property of the Black. Financial problems have always been common among students in higher education. About seven percent of all college students are from the lowest quarter of parental income, regardless of race, the figure itself indicative of the impact of economic discrimination.[1] The point is that academic preparation, space

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[1] cf. Fred M. Hechinger. "Education: A Growing Conflict Over the Effect of Open Admissions." The New York Times (October 12, 1969), 11-E. The most recent comparative data available on Black and nonblack students is found in Alan E. Bayer and Robert F. Boruch. The Black Student in American Colleges. Washington, D.C.: The American Council on Education, 1969.

availability, and student finances tend in practice to eliminate the Black youth from admissions, for various reasons, more exclusively than the white youth. It can be pointed out that by requiring a minimum Scholastic Aptitude Test score of five hundred, the institution limits itself to the top one percent of all Black high school seniors[2] as compared with the top fifteen percent of all male high school seniors taken together.[3] To lower the minimum to four hundred would only widen the range to include the top ten percent of Blacks.[4] So-called "educationally and sociologically disadvantaged students" are of no single race, yet after slavery and a lengthy history of discrimination against those American citizens who happen to be Black, it is justifiable to direct attention at this late point in history to the Black. Blacks in America are not simply an unenculturized minority group which will become indistinguishable with time. They are a racial group, easily distinguishable, and likely to remain so. It is as such that they must be considered.

Black students are not abundantly represented in American institutions of higher education. The most recent study indicates

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[2] S. A. Kendrick. "The Coming Segregation of our Selective Colleges." College Board Review, No. 66 (Winter, 1967-1968), 6-13.

[3] College Board Score Reports. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1963. Table 7, p. 18.

[4] S. A. Kendrick. loc. cit.; cf. David G. Brown. "Allocating Limited Resources." The Campus and the Racial Crisis. Washington, D.C.: The American Council on Education, 1969; and John C. Hoy. "The Price of Diversity." Saturday Review (February 15, 1969), 96-97.

that "slightly less than two percent of undergraduates in predominant white state universities and land-grant colleges" are Black.[5] Of these Blacks who were full-time students, nearly half were freshman in the Fall of 1968.[6] For this and other reasons, " . . . the conclusion that Black Americans are grossly underrepresented in higher education seems inescapable . . . desegregation in these institutions has, in fact, been largely token."[7]

Whether " . . . a total reevaluation from a Black perspective"[8] of institutions of higher education is justified or not, it is clear that the question of the place of the Black atypical student in higher education must be raised. In doing such, there are three main areas which, although interrelated, must be looked at individually: admissions, compensatory education, and Black studies.

Admissions.

Whom should the college or university admit as a student? Should it admit only a select few who have proven academic ability

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[5] John Egerton. State Universities and Black Americans: An Inquiry into Desegregation and Equity for Negroes in One Hundred Public Universities. Atlanta: Southern Education Foundation, 1969, 18. This study is based upon questionnaire replies from eighty institutions affiliated with the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges.

[6] Ibid., 21.

[7] Ibid., 21.

[8] Vincent Harding. "An Educator's View: Black Students and the 'Impossible Revolution'." Ebony, XXIV, 10 (August, 1969), 143.

in institutions below the collegiate level: should it offer admission to anyone who seeks admission in order to provide them the opportunity to succeed; or should it admit only those who are judged to be likely to benefit from that particular type and quality of education that the institution offers? Traditionally, higher education has been for the training of "gentlemen and scholars," an intellectual elite who were selected and trained to fill top positions in the society's leadership pyramid.[9] The classical liberal arts education was not meant for the common man and the common man seldom sought it. But with the birth of American pragmatism and the later impact of the experimentalists on American education in the 1920's, higher education came to be seen as the avenue through which the distinctions between the common man and the elite man were blurred, if not blotted out completely. The land-grant college has traditionally tried to offer a practical education for citizens of the state. American society came to place value on higher education for all of its citizens.[10] The Truman Commission advocated that forty-nine percent of American youth would be capable of completing fourteen years of education.[11] Nevertheless, many institutions held

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[9] cf. John S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy. Higher Education in Transition: An American History--1636-1956. New York: Harper & Row, 1958.

[10] cf. Earl J. McGrath. Universal Higher Education. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966.

[11] U.S. President's Commission on Higher Education. Higher Education for American Democracy, a Report. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947.

strongly to elitist-based selection criteria. At a similar time, junior colleges, community colleges, and branch campuses began to expand alternatives open to the student unable to gain admission to a normative four-year institution or only seeking two years of higher education.

To be among the chosen at a selective institution is gratifying both for the students and the faculty. Arguments arise as to the need to retain "high standards" of selectivity in admissions even when standards between colleges within a single university are often strongly divergent and standards presumably comparable among institutions throughout the nation show little, if any, real standardization or even similarity. But the selectivity issue in admissions remains powerful--objective standards are necessary, the quality of the student must be proven by past record or examination, ability to graduate must be thought possible, if not probable, "if the student applies himself." Accordingly, the institution selects its students from among those ranking highest on "objective measures" and works down the list until its vacancies are filled. There are few exceptions to this objectivity--except sometimes quietly for the desired athlete whose skill is deemed of benefit to the institution's reputation, for the resident of the state in public institutions over the non-resident, the alumnus' child, women in women's institutions, certain religions in religious institutions, Negroes in Negro institutions, and for the "favorite

son" of the influential in almost all institutions who makes these "objective" decisions. Strangely, the appeal of this process is its claim for objectivity. Its survival, in fact, has been its practicality. In most cases, admission's officers seek to admit only those who will be successful in terms of graduation from the institution within a specified period of time, usually four years. Unfortunately, within such a system, Blacks tend to account for only about four percent of all college graduates.[12]

Recently some educators have begun to point to the democratic principles upon which this country was founded and to call for "egalitarianism" through what is referred to as "open admissions" to public institutions.[13] Under this set of assumptions, all students holding a high school diploma, usually within a specified geographical region, would be given the opportunity to matriculate at a particular institution. In some cases more rigid standards might be added for certain programs, but it is here assumed that everyone deserves an equal chance at a college edu-

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[12] Alexander W. Astin and Robert J. Panos. The Educational and Vocational Development of College Students. Washington, D.C.: The American Council on Education, 1969. Egerton. loc. cit. found that less than one percent of the degrees awarded in his study sample went to Blacks (p. 21).

[13] cf. "Rockefeller Proposes an Open Door for State Universities." New York Times (December 7, 1969), Section IV, 7. It should be pointed out, of course, that "open admissions" is not a new idea. Universities such as Minnesota, Nebraska, Kansas, and Ohio State have traditionally had "open admissions." The University of Michigan began admitting students upon recommendation of the high school principal from "accredited" high schools in 1870, cf. I. L. Kandel Examinations and their Substitutes in the United States. New York: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Bulletin #28, 1936.

cation. Minimum standards are required for admission to particular programs, success is determined by the student's ability to remain in good standing at the institution, and the quality of the institution becomes a function of the instructional ability of the faculty. Vacancies in the freshman class may be filled by lottery or some similar random basis; more often a place is found for all who apply.

Actually what is being advocated by some educators is not "open admissions" at all but "preferential admissions". "Open admissions", as was just noted, refers to the practice of admitting any person who so presents himself to a degree program with a diploma from a high school. On the other hand, "preferential admissions", recognizing the need for certain groups or subgroups of individuals to have immediate access to higher education, admits these groups in preference to others on predetermined criteria. Preferential criteria have traditionally been based on geographic residence, sex, or expressed vocational objectives of the applicant. For example, most of those advocating "open admissions" today are willing only to admit students who have legal residence in a specific geographical area rather than any student who appears at the door. Therefore, it becomes more to the point to discuss "preferential admissions" where groupings and characteristics of both individuals and the changing society can be taken into consideration.

Yet even under the "preferential admissions" approach, there

remains the question as to whether Blacks will benefit. The Black atypical student often has been only minimally prepared academically by his high school. Hence, although admitted, there is the possibility that if the Black atypical student does not receive some form of compensatory education,[14] he will be unable to meet the academic standards necessary to continue and to graduate from the institution.

Another point that those advocating "preferential admissions" raise is the ethical issue of rejecting more qualified students who are more likely to succeed in favor of the possibly less qualified student chosen on a "special" selection basis. The argument runs that unless there is a significant growth in higher education facilities (faculties, space, institutions) permitting admission to all, some highly qualified students would be excluded. This growth seems unlikely in light of the resources necessary to support an "open admission" system--one not restricted by the number of students it is able to accept.[15] But possibly it would be fairer to turn away talent while giving

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[14]Compensatory education is dealt with in the following section of this paper.

[15]Although "unlikely", even this is not impossible. It is a myth to conclude that a particular institution has a "ceiling" above which it cannot admit students. Under conditions of crises in the past, such as the return of World War II veterans or the increased number of students seeking admission between 1954-1964, institutions of higher education did accept more students than their plans had considered. The University of California at Berkeley is but one example of a public institution that found it necessary to raise its "ceiling" several times and was able to do this without affecting its academic eminence.

everyone an equal opportunity than to continue with the present biased systems of selectivity. The talented student has a number of institutions of higher education open to him while the atypical student does not. Finally, the preferential system may be supported by a philosophy of "social good" rather than egalitarianism or individual right.

Such an argument, though initially intriguing, leads nowhere. The ethical question goes unchallenged. The solution would appear to be for an institution so choosing to commit itself to "preferential admissions" and to acknowledge frankly that this choice may mean that some better qualified students will be turned away while less qualified students are put in their place. Such a commitment could recognize the needs of today as requiring "preferential admissions" in an attempt to reply to the segregation mistakes of the past. While other institutions may challenge the wisdom of such a decision, the commitment is made openly.

It is important to be aware of further assumptions made by both positions. The selectivists admit only certain types of evidence into their consideration. In particular, their metaphysical framework is precisely a materialistic one in which all evidence is objective and subject to statistical calculation in equations correlated with graduation in four years. The question of what "ought" to be is not further considered. Rather the emphasis here is on predicting the probability of graduation from factors that the student brings with him into the institu-

tion of higher education.[16] This admission's process centers on the selectivists' question: "Can this student profit (i.e., graduate in four years as a marketable product) from the education offered at our institution?" The question is a practical one and generates a practical and workable solution as to whom to admit under the selectivists' assumptions. But in a society where ever increasing numbers of students are dropping "in" and "out" of formal higher education and where education is being viewed by "continuing education" people as lasting far into the middle years of one's life, the materialistic model seems to become increasingly less appropriate when considered in itself.

One might argue by contrast that the open admissionists seem too eager to agree with society's growing assumption that every son or daughter needs, i.e., "ought" to have, a higher education in order to be of value to the society and consequently to be considered a "success" in life. Such idealism, while

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[16]Historically, this came about around the turn of the century when each institution had its own peculiar requirements and a great deal of thought was given to "smoothing" the transition from high schools to colleges and universities. The need for some standardization in a seemingly chaotic situation, for both the high schools and colleges, resulted in the College Entrance Examination Board, November 17, 1900, from the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools of the Middle States Association. cf. Edwin C. Boome. Historical and Critical Discussion of College Admission Requirements. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1903; Claude M. Fuess. The College Board: Its First Fifty Years. New York: Columbia University Press, 1950.

having increasing justification from presentational realism,[17] is inconsiderate of the very equalitarianism assumptions it begins with: A youth no longer has the choice as to pursue or not to pursue a "college" education. In this case, the youth is forced subtly to serve the need expectations which society places on him. In other words, the old questions as to whether higher education is a "right" or a "privilege" and for a "few" or "many" are raised again in new words. It seems that the best an institution can do is to state clearly its educational goals and offerings and permit the student and society to respond. To do so, though, involves a certain amount of risk to the institution's future in a society where institutional economics sometimes mold the most idealistic of educational philosophies. Note, for example, that there have been few experimental colleges since the 1920's which have not been almost totally populated by students from the upper socio-economic classes in America. The tuition alone makes this selection even though there is no reason why experimental educational philosophies should only be of benefit to the upper socio-economic student.[18]

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[17]For example, the demand of American society for trained personnel and the lack of jobs available and advancement possibilities for the student whose highest training is twelve years of public school. For a philosophical background on this position, cf. Bertrand Russell. Our Knowledge of the External World. LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1914, 1, 85-93, 108-110, et. passim.

[18]Harold Taylor argues for the application of experimental educational philosophies and progressive education philosophy to students generally and attempts to delineate this further in his book, Students Without Teachers: The Crisis in the University. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1969.

It is unclear as to how a "preferential admissions" policy favoring Black atypical students would influence an institution of higher education today in the long run. There exists, of course, the underlying fear at many institutions that "preferential admissions" will result in an initial flooding of institutions by Black students and that the institutions will be radically altered. Both these "fears" may prove to be accurate,[19] but one should not be hasty in labeling them "fears." Blacks will not flood institutions unless the institution has not only "preferential admissions" but "preferential scholarships" as well. "Preferential admissions" assumes strong financial support from the public sector unless some form of lottery is used to limit enrollments. Quotas could be established on par with the racial balances proportional in either the immediate supportive community or the general society, but the likelihood of this occuring is slight. Institutions of higher education will change, but change per se should not be seen as necessarily bad in a country that was born in the passion of a revolution. The question becomes whether institutions of higher education will change themselves according to a well-conceived plan or be changed by the immediacy of the situation as it develops. The real fear, to probe deeper, seems to be that the institution and its faculties will not be able

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[19] cf. Richard J. Margolis. "The Two Nations at Wesleyan University." The New York Times Magazine (January 18, 1970), 9 et. seq.

to deal adequately with and educate the Black atypical student.[20] This student's needs are different from the needs of the middle class, white suburban resident. Will he respond under the traditional educational system? The fear is that there are too many differences. Change will occur.

Even after all of this has been said, institutions of higher education have dedicated themselves to educate the youth. This has traditionally meant leading the student by involving him with ideas and concepts. Alexander Astin[21] has challenged the universities to begin to educate rather than to select such students, who, all things being equal, will educate themselves in their college environment whether the institution's instruction be good, poor, or mediocre. The preferential admissionist's ideal assumes that the society requires good Black professionals for the Black community and that these Blacks must be competent. Is it not possible that the needs placed upon a Black professional in a Black community are quite different from those needs placed upon a white professional in a white community? What about an "integrated" community that is full of unresolved tensions? If this is so, then

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[20]Possibly this could be extended to the atypical student of any race or categorization. For example, while the ghetto student might produce a problem for the educational processes traditionally found in institutions of higher education, the bright student who is able to excel over his peers presents an equally difficult problem for traditional educational processes.

[21]Alexander W. Astin. "Racial Considerations in Admissions." The Campus and the Racial Crisis. Washington, D.C.: The American Council on Education, 1969.

the educational needs of the Black student may be quite different from those of the white student. Individualized higher education may prove to be necessary in particular relation to the Black.[22]

Can institutions of higher education provide education for the Black atypical student? Preliminary reports from institutions that have experimented with admitting Black atypical students into the traditional institution indicate that the dropout rate of these "special admission" students is either the same or slightly lower than that of "regular admission" students.[23] Berkeley has reported[24] a twenty-four percent dropout rate for its "disadvantaged students" in comparison to a twenty-five percent dropout rate for "regular admission students." Indications from the University of Michigan are that the median Black grade for "special admission" students is a "C" while the median white grade for "regular admission students" is a "B" to "B-" after one year.[25] But the sample size is incredibly small[26] and universities are clearly not reporting

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[22]cf. Stanley O. Ikenberry. "Instructional Systems in Higher Education: Specifications for Individualization." Center for the Study of Higher Education, The Pennsylvania State University, Report #2 (January, 1970), for a concise statement of the broader needs for individualized education of students generally.

[23]Robert L. Williams. "Gamble on High Risk Students: How it is Working." AAUW Journal (May, 1969), 173-177.

[24]Bill Somerville. "Can Selective Colleges Accommodate the Disadvantaged?" College Board Review, No. 65 (Fall, 1967), 5-10.

[25]Personal communication.

[26]In fact, some of the reports do not even list numbers of Blacks involved in "special admission" programs but merely report it to be "small".

their "failures" as loudly as their "successes." This, on the other hand, begs the broader criterion. If institutional decisions are only made on the basis of supporting pass-fail objective data, then the institutions are accepting only the selectivists' grounds and are not considering what the "open admissionists" or "preferential admissionists" would call the institution's obligation to educate the youth of the society. To this point, it seems clear that success in dealing with so-called "disadvantaged students" in traditional institutions depends upon:

> ". . . adequate counseling, chiefly academic but carrying over to personal and social areas, and on a heterogeneous--not wholly remedial--academic program allowing for a sense of accomplishment early in the student's career.[27]

Institutions of higher education "can" provide successful education, in terms of meeting standards allowing the student to continue. But, is this their role and "should" they do this?

Some educators argue strongly that we exist in a "meritocracy."[28] As such, the responsibility of institutions of higher education is to "preserve, investigate, and transmit" knowledge accumulated by society. But today, this perspective seems to be diminishing slightly. Society's leaders are frequently calling upon educators for technical help in meeting today's problems; government research contracts

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[27]Lewis B. Mayhew. "Programs for the Disadvantaged." Unpublished research manuscript. College Entrance Examination Board, n.d.

[28]Christopher Jencks and David Riesman. The Academic Revolution. New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc. 1968. cf. Logan Wilson. "Merit and Equality in Higher Education." A paper presented to the meetings of the American Council on Education (October 9, 1969).

are becoming so numerous within universities that the annual budget is dependent upon these monies; social scientists seem to be increasing in their desire to investigate society's problems with their particular techniques. The university is no longer "uninvolved" with the society around it. The only question is whether the university will use its involvements positively for the long-range good of the society or negatively (neutrally?) by continuing to uphold the status quo through remaining "color blind" to individual needs. American higher education, if it is to be a means of assisting a Black minority to the point where opportunity does become equal, must be willing to decide that it "ought" to educate the Black atypical student and consequently to begin.

The time is ripe for institutions of higher education to recognize their biases as applied to admission's policy and to state these biases clearly. Institutions are secure and large enough within American society to be able to afford to gamble on admissions.[29] One way to begin in an educational system that is cautious by nature is to experiment selectively within selected colleges or programs within a total university. In this way, a synthesis between the selectivists and open admissionists can be developed and a broader approach can be brought to bear on the question of admissions for the atypical student by any measure

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[29]David G. Brown. "Allocating Limited Resources." The Campus and the Racial Crisis. Washington, D.C.: The American Council on Education, 1969.

and of any race. It is at this point that the "preferential admissions" advocate has much to say. Most of all, an admission's policy today needs to explicitly take into account that Black atypical students can succeed when the institution provides a sound education.[30] Any racial bias in the past which has unknowingly worked to exclude the Black needs to be countered by a racial bias in the present to include the Black for the immediate and future good of the American society.

Compensatory Education.

Once the question of admission is settled, the institution is faced with the task of providing an education for the Black atypical student who has been admitted. Two issues arise: First, should Blacks receive any form of extra academic help from the institution to attempt to balance the educational deficiencies in study habits or basic skills that the Black atypical student brings with him? Second, should the institution offer the Black the normal curriculum or should special programs be established to meet the particular needs of Blacks at this point in history? The first question will be dealt with in this section and the second, subsequently.

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[30]Kenneth B. Clark and Lawrence Plotkin. The Negro Student at Integrated Colleges. New York: National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students, 1963, where NSSFNS students are studied in detail and clearly indicate their ability to graduate. Kenneth B. Clark. "Answers for 'Disadvantaged' Is Effective Teaching." New York Times (January 12, 1970), 50, emphatically rejects the notion that Black children cannot be expected to learn in the same ways as white children and argues that the problem lies within teaching effectively.

The issue of compensatory education, attempting to provide a supplementary educational experience for the atypical student to insure him of a fair chance for success, is a complex one. Meritocratic philosophy, which assumes the rightness of allowing an intellectual pyramid to be formed through educational selectivity, sees the whole of compensatory education to be unnecessary. In this case, no one is admitted who is not expected to succeed. The student is on his own to see if he can survive the pressures of a modern institution of higher education where large numbers of first-year students either "drop out" or "flunk out" and where this is both expected and considered normal. But possibly this situation ought not to be seen as "normal."

Compensatory education per se assumes that there exists a basic body of skills which a student has failed to grasp by a certain chronological point in time. The very existence of a need for compensatory education at the college level implies one of the following: (1) that the lower schools in American society have failed to educate adequately the atypical youth, (2) that his environment, i.e., home and community, has in some way contributed to his atypical situation as a student, or (3) that teachers in the regular courses within higher education are not prepared, either through lack of time, skills, or resources, to offer the individual atypical student the attention he requires if he is to be met at his own level. Many educators who claim that the uniqueness of the American system of education is in its

emphasis on individualized instruction find this uniqueness to be denied when special courses are necessary to meet the educational needs of a particular student. Others would equally point out that it has always been the nature of higher education, since higher education was institutionalized in medieval universities, to educate elitist students who were able to prove their ability rather than to attempt to pace instruction to the atypical student. Nevertheless, the issue cannot be settled in the abstract. If the Black atypical student is to be admitted to institutions of higher education, in terms of the general social welfare, then the issue must be raised for the Black himself.

Various colleges and universities in America now have special programs not limited exclusively to, but predominately filled by Blacks. Such terms as FEED, SEEK, COP, FOP, HEOP, SOUL, and TRY represent only a partial listing of programs that focus on minorities. Actually lists of such programs overstate the actual amount of involvement by institutions of higher education today.

A 1964 study reports[31] that thirty-seven percent of the six hundred and ten institutions responding (i.e., two hundred and twenty-four institutions), had some form of compensatory education available while sixty-three percent or three hundred and eighty-six institutions reported no form of compensatory education. Interest-

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[31]Edmund W. Gordon and Doxey A. Wilkerson. Compensatory Education for the Disadvantaged. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1966.

ingly enough, those institutions where compensatory education was reported tended to be two-year institutions rather than four-year institutions and were located in a metropolitan rather than in a non-metropolitan area. Well over half of the institutions reporting were assisting fewer than thirty disadvantaged students each. A 1969 study in one of the Eastern States of America[32] shows that fifty percent of four-year institutions of higher education in that state do not sponsor special advising or academic assistance programs on their own and seventy-two percent have no such programs sponsored by others. Such programs would include prematriculation summer programs like "Upward Bound." As far as compensatory education itself, only fifteen percent of the four-year institutions in that state were found to offer post-matriculation compensatory education. In other words, there is no indication that compensatory education is widespread in practice within American higher education.

A corollary point is that compensatory education, when available, is normally only available for the first year. The assumption seems to be that a single year of compensatory education will adequately compensate for years of deficient education in the past or that if an atypical student is not capable of attaining "regular" standards after a single year, then the student should be "discharged."

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[32]Personal communication.

In terms of practice, then, the Black atypical student in an institution of higher education raises two questions: Should compensatory education be offered within institutions of higher education and if so, how? As Egerton points out, "The biggest question facing institutions helping high risk students seems to be whether they should be accorded special attention or treated in the same manner as all other students."[33]

The argument for compensatory education runs as follows: The American educational system prides itself on offering equal educational opportunity to all students, but the hard reality of the situation is that students who grow up in a ghetto receive an inferior education in terms of traditional academic criteria. Often these students are Blacks. In this way, these students are inadequately prepared and cannot be expected to compete at the point of high school graduation with students who have received a superior education. Accordingly, some students do not in reality have an equal opportunity for higher education in a society where higher education is coming more and more to be expected as the norm. These students are relegated to an inferior position in the very system which claims to offer equality. The university, nevertheless, has the opportunity to correct the effects of the past for these students through individualizing the educational process to meet the particular student's needs. This, it is

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[33]John Egerton. "High Risk." Southern Education Report (March, 1968), 7.

argued, is the university's moral obligation especially when the university is supported through public monies. Proponents point out that experience so far with Black atypical students indicates that Blacks are well-motivated in programs where they see relevance for their future.[34] On this account, compensatory education advocates argue that the institution of higher education should frankly lay its standards on the line, offer the Black atypical student the chance for reeducation complementary to the regular curricular program, and be willing to see the utilization of the institution's most highly qualified faculty in compensatory education as a major part of the institution's service to society.

The argument against compensatory education runs as follows: Curriculum differentiation is wrong since it implies that some students are inferior to other students, and even if this is the case, it is wrong for a student to be placed in a position where he will come to see himself as inferior. This argument is held to be especially valid for a Black student who has been led to view himself as inferior through a subtle and a not-so-subtle system of segregation throughout the years. On top of these considerations, there is no indication that compensatory education will overcome a more lengthy background of academic deprivation. It is, therefore, more realistic to help the student find a suitable place for himself

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[34]It might be noted that this statement is no doubt true for all students in higher education whether Black atypical students or not.

in some vocation offering advancement but not requiring a post-secondary degree. A student motivated beyond this level of accomplishment always has the option of night school and extension education at a slower pace. Since alternatives already exist and have been effective historically within American society, there is no reason to concentrate faculty time in compensatory education when this same time can be more effectively used with students who are more likely to succeed and may offer the future capacity for expanding the "frontiers of knowledge". Faculty effort with these latter students is imperative for the future of American society where effective means of eliminating the negative results of an atypical background may be developed.

Proponents on both sides of the question recognize that little research evidence exists presently upon which to answer the question as to whether compensatory education is practical at the higher education level and as to how it can effectively be accomplished. Most research data available are on children[35] rather than college students. But, to argue solely from research literature is to misread the society in which the university exists. The university could put forth the effort to develop solid programs in compensatory education if this were one of its priority items. The real question

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[35] cf. Arthur R. Jensen. "The Psychologically Disadvantaged: Psychological and Educational Aspects." Educational Research, X, 1 (1967), 4-20. It is also true, on the other hand, that institutions of higher education over the years have taught non-credit courses (i.e., Math 0 or English 0) as compensatory courses for students who, on the basis of placement tests, were felt to be deficient in these areas.

is whether or not the university includes the offering of compensatory education among its goals. Is it the function of the university to offer higher educational opportunity to all members of the society who may possibly profit by it? Many institutions have assumed so in the past. If it is, then institutions of higher education may want to view compensatory education as its public duty to insure that educational opportunity is available equally, even to those whose past record has not shown them to be among the intellectually most capable members of the society. What a given institution may want to do is not at issue. What is being argued here is that the identical pressures which are forcing an opening in restricted admission barriers will not tolerate these same students being rapidly dismissed as alleged academic failures. Black Studies.

Following the increasing attention directed to Blacks within America after the 1954 Supreme Court decision, institutions of higher education within America have come more and more to develop special programs, courses, and administrative units (departments or institutes) directed to Blacks and Black culture. Often these programs began by stressing African heritage and African languages, but it is now common to find programs focusing on American Blacks per se. Most of these programs have been created in the last few years and few seem to be an integrated part of a well thought-out educational philosophy.[36] Within these programs, called "Black

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[36] cf. Steven V. Roberts. "Black Studies Off to a Shaky Start, Beset by Rivalries." The New York Times (November 23, 1969), 1, 85: "Black Studies: A Painful Birth." Time (January 26, 1970), 50.

Studies", two major emphases can be found.

On the one hand, Black studies are an academic area of investigation sharing the same goals and functions as other academic ethnic studies. In this regard, Black specialists are developing in the same ways that Russian specialists were developed and integrated within faculties during the "Cold War." It is common for Russian specialists to be of Russian background; similarly, Black specialists are often Black. Such specialists offer courses within the area of their interests and serve the community in the same ways that other faculty members have traditionally served. In this way, a Black studies program complements a general education and becomes as valid a background for social work, education, etc., as any liberal arts program.

On the other hand, Black studies are seen by others as offering Black youth a chance to identify with other Blacks and with Black culture.[37] In this way, the Black youth is able to avoid, even if only temporarily, the society which has made him feel inferior all of his life. In order to do this, it is necessary for the Black to be separated from the white in whose presence he has been made to feel inferior. Here the Blackness of a teacher becomes paramount since the emphasis is not on a body of knowledge

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[37]Nathan Hare sees, for example, the "key function" of Black Studies as producing "ego-identity and ethnic confidence" for the Black youth. cf. "Black Leaders Speak Out on Black Education." Today's Education, LVIII, 7 (October, 1969), 29.

to be pursued,[38] but on the experience which provides for a source of positive identification and hopefully enables the student to take pride in his Blackness and rise above a society which is blocking him. Although traditional educators have a tendency to look down on this point of view, it should be recognized that this is precisely the raison d'etre behind the denominational, religious institutions, especially Roman Catholic, of the past. There is some indication that this point of view, which one is tempted to refer to as an "identification perspective," will increase in its proponents in the future.[39]

Although these two emphases appear mutually exclusive, frequently institutions of higher education seem to be operating with both poles of thought striving for control over a single program. Part of the problem has been the rapidness with which Black studies programs have developed. It can be pointed out that in the February, 1968, American Historical Association Newsletter there were listed one hundred and thirteen job vacancies in United States history but only one in Negro history.[40] By contrast, the February, 1969, Newsletter listed one hundred

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[38]This is not to imply that there is not a body of knowledge pursued in this way. It is simply to point out that the focal point of this approach is not the body of knowledge but the identification process which educates the Black into a fuller recognition of his own accomplishments and potentials, i.e., a "Black perspective."

[39]Vincent Harding. "Fighting the 'Mainstream' Seen for 'Black D[illegible]de'." New York Times (January 12, 1970), 50.

[40]"The Results of Black Power: Increased Offerings of Black History Courses." Integrated Education (July-August, 1969), 57.

and twenty-eight job vacancies in United States history, twenty-five in Black history, Negro history, Afro-American history, ethnic history, and one in American Indian history. Similarly, a study of campus disruptions indicates that Black study programs of one form or another were begun as a direct result of protests with violence in 49.9% of the instances studied and only in 17.8% of the instances without any protest at all.[41] In other words, there is every indication that Black study programs of one form or another are increasing rapidly on campuses and are more often than not the result of an immediate response to pressure rather than part of an educational plan.

Possibly the development of Black study programs in the forms noted above is as it should be. Blacks in America have been absent too long from academic circles, and most white Americans know little of Black culture or background. Traditionally, not much has been said in public schools concerning the Black in America unless the topic has been slavery or segregation. Today, there are over three hundred and fifty Black history books available to a secondary school teacher.[42] Most educators agree that this is a long-overdue development.

There is, nonetheless, a distinct absence of unanimous agreement concerning these programs. The content and philosophy

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[41]American Council on Education. "Study on Disruptions on Campus, 1968-1969" (Fall, 1969).

[42]Fall, 1969. This number was derived from adding up the various titles advertised as "Black History Books" by ninety publishers.

behind a Black studies program is not agreed upon even among Blacks. Federal City College, a recently opened prodominantly Black college in Washington, D.C., went through major internal adjustments in attempting to decide such things as the qualifications necessary to teach in Black studies.[43] In this case, the conflict between the two emphases put forth above (i.e., scholarship specializing in Black studies as opposed to separate programs providing for Black identification) had to be worked out within this predominately Black administration and faculty. The result seems to have been the departure of those who stressed the more exclusive identification functions of Black studies from the institution.

There is a tendency among some educators to view the issue of Black studies primarily in terms of their "usefulness" to the Black. To argue against Black study programs from this perspective, the lack of placement alternatives to a college graduate who has a degree in Black studies is pointed out. This graduate, so the argument goes, has no skills that the society will hire other than possibly teaching Black studies in a secondary school. Amitai Etzioni, for example, defines the matter by distinguishing between

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[43] cf. Herbert H. Denton. "Program Splits City College." The Washington Post (March 6, 1969), 1, 10; Wallace Roberts. "Federal City: Prospects for the Common College." Change, I, 6 (November-December, 1969), 44-52; Malcolm G. Scully. "After a Year of Crisis, Federal City College Drops Experiments for Traditional Forms." The Chronicle of Higher Education (October 27, 1969), 3.

"instrumental education . . . referring to education acquired as a means to other ends than sheer acquisition of knowledge as such"[44] and "expressive education" as "a goal in itself . . .."[45] The implication that Etzioni leaves is that higher education today must provide the Black with "instrumental education" if it is to be of service either to the Black or the society. Here, too, the argument is often raised that an employer wants someone to perform specific tasks (i.e., accounting or analytic chemistry) and is unconcerned if the employee has had Black history or not.

These arguments, in some respects, miss the point, for a degree in Black studies should be just as useful (or instrumental or sellable) as a degree in "general arts and sciences" or any other of the liberal arts degrees that assume the holder will continue in some form of professional training. Is the Black who majors in Black studies and then decides he wants to be a lawyer any worse off than if he were to major in "pre-law" and then decide that the last thing he wants to be is a lawyer? Probably not. The simple fact is that educators are used to the latter arrangement but not to the former.

Kenneth Clark, to name one among many who have analyzed the matter, has been quite rigorous in arguing that Black studies which are exclusively for and limited to Blacks lead to unequal

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[44] Amitai Etzioni. "Faculty Response to Racial Tensions." The Campus and the Racial Crisis. Washington, D.C.: The American Council on Education, 1969, 110, n. 6.

[45] Ibid.

education and a new form of segregation.[46] In speaking of Black studies which primarily set as their objective an identification for the Black student (i.e., the second emphasis elaborated at the beginning of this section), there is no doubt that he is right. What is not needed is to create a second-rate degree for a people who have already been treated second-rate. Nevertheless, the first emphasis for an area of scholarly concentration on Blacks remains open.

Institutions of higher education can provide Black studies without offering second-rate degrees, unqualified instructors, or misleading students.[47] Existing courses can be broadened to recognize specific contributions made by Blacks when applicable. Specific courses within various disciplines on Black topics can be added. Areas of Black concentration can be formulated, and research can be begun to fill the gap. In short, there is no reason why Black studies cannot be developed to fill the needs of the Black community at the same time as the needs of the academic community are met. In doing so, the more exclusive emphasis of providing primarily a means of filling the young Black's need for psychological identification at the expense of a solid academic program must be rejected as beyond the nature

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[46] Kenneth B. Clark. "A Charade of Power: Black Students at White Colleges." The Antioch Review, XXIX, 2 (Summer, 1969), 145-148. cf. Ray Wilkins. "Black Leaders Speak Out on Black Education." Today's Education, LVIII, 7 (October, 1969), 25-32.

[47] cf. Armstead Robinson, Craig C. Foster, and Donald H. Ogilvie. Black Studies In the University: A Symposium. New York: Bantam Books, 1969, for a controversial discussion of these issues.

and function of the university. In different words, racially segregated programs that exclude either whites or Blacks must be rejected on the grounds that they are outside the goals and purposes of the university.

Overview.

The Black atypical student, when all is said and done, is beginning to find entrance into institutions of higher education in America. One source optimistically claims, ". . . probably more than fifty percent of the institutions for higher education in this country now have special programs for the disadvantaged or high risk students."[48] A sizable proportion of such students would be expected to be Black atypical students. These students appear to be concentrated primarily in public institutions. There are, for example, five times the number of Black students in public institutions than are in private institutions. But of equal significance is the fact that the number of Black undergraduates remains proportionately quite small.[49] In all, there is no indication reported, to this point, of institutions of higher education in America admitting large numbers of either

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[48]Williams, "Gamble on High Risk Students: How It is Working," loc. cit., p. 173. Hugh M. Gloster, President of Morehouse College, also predicts a rise in the Black enrollment but seems to feel that the increasing availability of financial aids, legislation, and new state and community centers will be influential here. cf. "Negro Colleges Face a Crises." New York Times (January 12, 1970), 50.

[49]John Egerton. State Universities and Black Americans: An Inquiry into Desegregation and Equity for Negroes in One Hundred Public Universities. Atlanta: Southern Education Foundation, 1969, 7, 94.

Black atypical students or the more general categories of "disadvantaged students" or "high risk" students of any race, be they financially or culturally deprived. For example, one large northeastern public university which has a "program" for admitting atypical students registered eight thousand one-hundred and seventy-four new freshmen in the Fall of 1969 for four-year programs. Among these were two hundred and fifty-one freshmen claimed to be atypical or disadvantaged students. Three percent of Fall freshmen were atypical by that particular university's classifications, of which about eighty-nine percent of the three percent were Black. The majority of these students who were admitted as atypical met the institution's minimum academic requirements, but they were strongly in need of financial aid.[50] This institution is not untypical of institutions of higher education in America. To this point, little information is available concerning professional education, i.e., law, medicine, pharmacy, theology, and the Black atypical student.

Institutions of higher education generally appear to be taking a conservative approach to the education of the Black atypical student.[51] This conservatism is prevalent in spite of

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[50]These students were atypical in terms of the second and third factors used in defining the Black atypical student in this paper: ". . . although the Black can meet the minimum standards of academic preparation, there are so many other students scoring higher on the criterion selectors that the openings for entering students are filled before the Black is offered admission . . . (and) the Black lacks the financial means to accept admission to an institution." (supra. p. 2).

[51]The major reason for this is said to be, by some, the lack of adequate financial resources to support the Black atypical student.

data that has tended to indicate that the dropout rate has generally been higher for regular students than for atypical students within a program. Although it may be argued that programs to this date have been "conservative" enough in their selection of students that success is somewhat assured, there are no reported incidents of any institution being forced to lower graduation standards for the atypical student.[52]

Institutions of higher education in America have several options. First, the institution can claim that it is the nature of higher education to select those potential students judged most likely to benefit from higher education and consequently graduate. Therefore, the institution can claim its right to select its student body on any criteria, objective or otherwise, judged acceptable and appropriate by its trustees, faculty, and administration without regard to "race, religion, creed, or national origin." By so choosing, the institution acknowledges its goal.

Second, the institution, recognizing the ambiguous nature of the educational process in general and the lack of standardization among admission and graduation criteria among institutions of higher education in particular, can choose to use a random method of selecting students. Again, under the goals and purposes of that particular institution, the institution may choose to admit all students or fill its vacancies under a random method

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[52]Williams, "Gamble on High Risk Students: How It Is Working," loc. cit., p. 173-177.

of some form (lottery?) giving equal opportunity to those to whom the institution is pledged to educate. This option would assume that the primary goal of the faculty is to meet the students where they are and move forward with them. A faculty, therefore, which sought primarily to engage in the frontiers of pure research and whose status and tenure were based upon such, would be frustrated under this option.

Third, an institution may choose selectively to extend its educational offerings to varying individuals under varying criteria. Thus, the institution might choose to admit individuals upon the recommendation of a program chairman, department faculty, or some other designated individual. Computerized admissions could be limited and automatic dropping of a student for academic reasons could be used only as a last resort. Under the framework of the goals and purposes of both the institution itself and the various programs within it, a heterogeneous population could be developed. Such a program would assume top administrative backing and a commitment to a diversity of admission procedures with decisions being made in various places throughout the institution and to a diversity of educational modes and techniques within the institution.

Somewhere within the above three options the various institutions of higher education in America are choosing their course. Their response to the Black atypical student is still in doubt. The major questions facing institutions of higher education today

in American society are, first, whether or not the institution will respond to the Black atypical student as representing a special case needing special attention and, second, how the university's nature and function makes any response possible. It is the conclusion of this paper that the response itself can only be made within a consideration of what it is that a particular institution of higher education is and would be. How an institution faces that question sets the assumption for a response to the Black atypical student in particular and the educational needs of its student body in general.